IRAQ

ETC Situation Report # 12

Reporting period 05/12/14 to 18/12/14

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Highlights

- A telecommunications team has increased the physical capacity of the digital radio network in Sulaymaniyah in order to provide comprehensive digital radio services to all the UN agencies operating there.

- Repeaters supplied by UNAMI in Sulaymaniyah were re-configured to provide increased analogue radio coverage to the humanitarian community.

Cluster Responsibilities

- WFP is leading ETC activities in Iraq. The ETC is responsible for providing emergency telecommunications support to humanitarian organizations on the ground.

Achievements

- A telecommunications team has increased the physical capacity of the digital radio network in Sulaymaniyah in order to provide comprehensive digital radio services to all the UN agencies operating there. By using the additional radio frequencies provided by UNAMI, four additional channels were added to the DMR network. The network will become operational once licences for the repeater equipment installed are obtained.

- The UNAMI repeater in Sulaymaniyah was re-configured to provide increased analogue radio coverage to the humanitarian community.

- Radio training is being delivered by the ETC to UN and NGO staff on an ongoing basis. This is to ensure that correct radio protocol is consistently followed by all humanitarian organizations to ensure the safety of staff. UNAMI, together with ETC instructors, has organized regular radio training sessions for UN staff. To date, the ETC has trained approximately 100 staff from various humanitarian organizations.

- The ETC continues to configure radios for UN agencies and NGOs with a standard program compatible with both digital and analogue radio networks. To date, over 245 individual radios have been processed.

- ETC wireless internet connectivity is available to all humanitarian organizations in three key operational areas: Domiz and Arbat camps, as well as a transit camp 7 kms from Arbat. To date, there are 112 registered users in the Arbat area, and 39 in Domiz.

Connectivity to Save Lives

- All UN agencies are encouraged to compile call-sign lists according to a common ETC format. This will ensure radio rooms can track staff more effectively, hence improving security.

- The new ETC Coordinator, John Bursa, is scheduled to arrive on 23/12/14.

Challenges and Gaps

- Flight options for the importation of equipment remain limited. This can delay the deployment of humanitarian ICT services.

- Additional radio frequencies are required to expand the capacity of the digital network in Erbil. UNAMI has requested these frequencies and government approval is pending.

- Any staff wishing to travel outside of Erbil must attend SAIT training, which takes four days. In addition, several days may be needed to apply and receive residency status thus delaying further deployment to the field.

- There have been occasions when internet services have being disrupted by faulty wireless links which are managed by local ISPs. The ETC has been following up with the respective ISPs to improve their services.

Planned Activities

- An ETC team will be deployed to Dohuk in early 2015 to upgrade the emergency telecommunications infrastructure between Dohuk and the nearby Domiz camp. Tasks to be completed by the team include:

  o Relocating the radio room from Domiz camp to Dohuk

  o Setting up microwave links between Dohuk and Domiz camp to support a DMR network

  o Re-configuring the UNAMI analogue repeater for better coverage in Dohuk and Domiz camp.

  o Reprograming of VHF radios and radio training.

- Establishment of inter-agency radio services in Erbil to improve staff and vehicle tracking as well as their security.

- Setting up of an ETC "help desk" service in all the areas where ETC services are available to provide information on those services and provide assistance where possible.

Meetings

Global ETC teleconference

The next Global ETC teleconference will be held on 14/01/15.

Local ETC meeting

The next Local ETC meeting TBC.

All information related to ETC operations can be found on the ICT Emergency website:
http://ictemergency.wfp.org

For more information, or to be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact: xxx.ETC@wfp.org

Services Available

CITY	LEAD AGENCY	ETC SERVICES
Erbil	WFP	• Coordination • Information Management • VHF radio coverage
Sulamaniyah	WFP	• VHF radio coverage
Arbat Camp	WFP	• Internet connectivity • VHF radio coverage
Dohuk	WFP	• VHF radio coverage
Domiz Camp	WFP	• Internet connectivity • VHF radio coverage
Basra	WFP	• *Planned Assessment mission*

ETC Iraq Focal Points

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Acronyms

DMR   Digital Mobile Network

ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
FITTEST	Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergency and Support Team
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ISP	Internet Service Provider
IT	Information Technology
SAIT	Security Awareness and Induction Training
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq
VHF	Very High Frequency
WFP	World Food Programme